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KABUL FOR COS USFOR-A  
STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A  
NSC FOR WOOD  
OSD FOR MCGRAW

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/04/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV PTER AF

SUBJECT: PALACE NIXES HIG-TALIBAN RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood, for reasons 1.4 (a), (b) and (d)

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Summary  
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¶1. (S) The Palace will not participate in the proposed HIG-Taliban reconciliation conference touted by Gulbaddin Hekmatyr, s son-in-law Himauyun Jareer to the BBC and other media outlets on December 21. Deputy NSA Ibrahim Spenzada claims Iran is backing Jareer, s initiative to undermine the slow, but still running, Saudi initiative. Qayum Karzai will visit Kabul in the near future to update the Palace on the Saudi initiative.

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Palace rejects Jareer, s Iran-backed reconciliation initiative  
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¶2. (U) In a January 3 meeting, Spenzada explained that Karzai rejected Jareer, s proposal to convene a meeting between Afghan authorities and insurgent groups (i.e., Taliban and HIG) to be held in an unnamed Gulf country on a date to be determined. Jareer spoke on December 21 to BBC and Ariana TV about his proposal, claiming it enjoyed the backing of the Afghan government and representatives of the Taliban and HIG.

¶3. (S) Spenzada claims Iran is behind the Jareer proposal, seeking to undermine the Saudi reconciliation initiative. Jareer, s proposal specifically calls for no involvement of foreigners, which some may interpret as westerners, but which, according to Spenzada, Jareer and the Iranians really mean as the Saudis.

¶4. (S) Jareer, s claim of Afghan government backing was based on the participation of Economy Minister Jalil Shams in an early December meeting in Kabul involving Jareer, Upper House Speaker Mojaddedi, proxy representatives for the Taliban and HIG, and other individuals. The twenty or so participants gathered to draft a terms of reference document for participants at the proposed Gulf country meeting, but failed to reach consensus.

¶5. (C) When Karzai subsequently learned of Shams participation in the December meeting, he and other Palace principals upbraided Shams. Shams claimed to have tried to get Karzai, s preauthorization. Spenzada explained that Jareer probably called on his old personal connections with Shams to persuade the latter to participate. Spenzada reiterated that the Jareer initiative enjoyed no government support.

¶6. (C) In parallel, Karzai raised the Jareer proposal at a meeting with the U.S. and UK ambassadors, described it as an

effort to undermine the constitution and block national elections, attributed it to the Iranians, and said he had already blocked it.

¶7. (C) On HIG outreach in general, Spenzada's main HIG counterpart recently suffered injuries in a car accident and will be recuperating and out of contact for several weeks. Spenzada said the Palace was taking a more cautious posture with HIG following evidence of its role in the attacks on French soldiers in Sarobi and the December 29 suicide attack in Parwan, which killed two Afghans and wounded 17, including two American troops.

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Saudi initiative: Little new, Qayum consultations in Kabul  
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¶8. (S) The Saudis have informed Spenzada they have been in contact with Taliban representatives, but had no new developments yet to share with the Palace. Spenzada affirmed that the Palace was patient in awaiting next steps, recognizing that the Saudis were generally cautious in nature, and especially so on this delicate issue.

¶9. (S) Spenzada reported that Qayum Karzai planned to come to Kabul in the near future to brief the Palace in person on recent developments. Spenzada reaffirmed the Palace's pledge to keep the United States informed of any new developments over the coming months.

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